

REMARKS

Claims 1-28 are now pending in the application. Support for the claim amendments are found throughout the specification. As such, no new matter is being added. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102 AND § 103

Relying primarily on the teachings of Anderson (U.S. Patent No. 2,507,847), the Examiner has rejected each of the claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102 or § 103. More particularly, Claims 1-7, 12-16, and 21-26 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Anderson. Claims 8 and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Anderson. Claims 9-11 and 18-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Anderson in view of Geddes (U.S. Patent No. 2,172,467). Claims 27 and 28 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Anderson in view of Negrao (U.S. Design Patent No. 430,174). These rejections are respectfully traversed for the reasons set forth below.

Applicants respectfully submit that the present teachings depart significantly from the collective teachings of the prior art. In this regard, the present teachings include a latching arrangement including a handle that drives a cam follower along an arcuate path and thereby rotates a pawl from a latched position to an unlatched position. Furthermore, movement of the handle in an opposite direction functions to drive the cam follower in the opposite direction along the arcuate path and thereby rotate the pawl from the unlatched position to the latched position.

Applicants further submit that the original claims patentably define the present teachings over the art of record. Applicants have further amended the claims to even further patentably define the present teachings. In this regard, independent Claim 1 has been amended to recite that the handle drives the cam follower along an arcuate path and thereby rotates the pawl from the latched position to the unlatched position. The teachings of Anderson are quite distinct in that the handle identified by the Examiner simply functions to retract a biasing spring so as to allow linear translation of a member 37 along a slot. While it is true that the “pawl” of Anderson pivots about member 37, this pivotal movement is provided by movement of the striker relative to the pawl rather than driven motion of the handle. In this regard, Anderson provides as follows:

To release the door for opening, the handle **48** is pulled upon outwardly, swinging the finger **52** clockwise, and retracting the bars **33** and rollers **45** and compressing the spring **42**. This relieves the bolt **24** of the spring action and permits the door to be opened whereupon the bolt will be swung by engagement with the keeper to the unlatched position shown in Fig. 2 and held in this cocked position by the rollers **45** resting in the flange portions **20**. In such movement, the bolt is tilted substantially to the position shown in Fig. 2. When the door is closed with the bolt thus positioned, the finger at **29** coming to the outer end of the head **10** of the keeper and striking thereagainst, causes tilting of the latch bolt about the pin **37** to disengage rollers **45** from seating at **20** against the bolt support, freeing the bolt for movement of the roller **26** into engagement with the keeper head and with the rollers **45** partly entering the recesses provided at the bends at **18**. This movement of the rollers **45** against the flanges **18** swings the bolt **24** downwardly about the pin **37** and in its arc of movement the roller **26** moves outwardly relative to the door and into engagement with the keeper **10**. (emphasis added)

Accordingly, the refrigerator recited by independent Claim 1 is not taught nor suggested by the art of record. The remaining references of record are similarly

lacking. Further, the refrigerator of Claim 1 would not have been obvious in view of the collective art of record. For these reasons alone, Applicants submit that Claim 1 and Claims 2-14 dependent therefrom are in a condition for allowance.

Applicants further submit that the claims dependent from Claim 1 still yet further define the refrigerator of Claim 1 over the art of record. In this regard, those dependent claims recite at least the following limitations that specifically define over the art of record:

Claim	Limitation(s)	Comment
2	The movement of the handle drives the pawl to rotate from the unlatched position to the latched position.	The handle of Anderson does not drive the pawl to rotate to the latched position.
3	The second axis is a fixed pivot axis.	The "pivot axis (37)" of Anderson translates.
4	The cam surface is a curved cam surface.	Anderson and the remaining cited art fail to teach a curved cam surface.
5	The handle pivot axis is located proximate a first free end of the handle and the cam follower is located proximate a second free end of the handle.	Anderson and the remaining art of record fail to teach or suggest a handle and cam follow proximate opposing free ends of the handle. Such an arrangement allows for an elongated structure that can be recessed into the door.
6	The pawl and handle pivot axes are located along a line substantially parallel to a front face of the door.	Anderson and the remaining art of record fail to teach or suggest pawl and handle pivot axes located along a line substantially parallel to a front face of the door. Such an arrangement allows for an elongated structure that can be recessed into the door.
7	The biasing element is a leaf spring.	The biasing element of Anderson is a coil spring.
8	The biasing element is spaced from the handle pivot axis.	The biasing element of Anderson is surrounds the handle pivot axis.
9	The at least one cam surface of the handle is defined by a curved slot.	Anderson and the remaining art of record teach, at best, linear cam surfaces.

Claim	Limitation(s)	Comment
10	The slot of the handle is curved along its length to drive the cam follower along an arcuate path.	Anderson and the remaining art of record teach, at best, linear cam surfaces.
11	The curved slot is defined by a pair of fingers.	Anderson and the remaining art of record teach, at best, linear cam surfaces.
12	The handle extends generally parallel to the front face of the door along its entire length.	The handle of Anderson is L-shaped.
13	The latching arrangement is substantially disposed with a recess of the door and substantially hidden from view.	Anderson is not disposed in a recess. Negrao et al illustrates an opening in the door to receiving a hand. This opening does not include a latching arrangement. These two references cannot be combined.
14	The refrigerator is a gas absorption refrigerator.	The cited art fails to teach or suggested a gas absorption refrigerator.

Applicants respectfully request a thorough examination of independent Claim 1 and dependent Claims 2-14 dependent therefrom.

Independent Claim 15 has been amended in a manner similar to Claim 1 to recite that the handle drives the cam follower along an arcuate path and thereby rotates the pawl from the latched position to the unlatched position. For the reasons discussed above with respect to Claim 1, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 15 and Claims 16-20 dependent therefrom are in a condition for allowance. As with the claims depending from Claim 1, Claims 16-20 even further define the present invention over the cited art.

Independent Claim 21 has been amended to recite that the pawl is connected to the door and driven by the handle to rotate about a fixed pivot axis. As discussed above, the "pawl" of Anderson is driven to rotate through engagement with the striker. The handle of Anderson simply retracts a coil spring and allows linear translation along

a slot. The "pivot axis (37)" of Anderson is not a fixed axis, but rather is able to move along the slot. Thus, the handle of Anderson does not teach or suggest a pawl that is driven by a handle for rotation about a fixed pivot axis. Furthermore, the refrigerator set forth in Claim 21 would not have been obvious in view of the collective art of record. Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 21 and Claims 22-28 dependent therefrom are in a condition for allowance. As with the claims depending from Claim 1, Claims 22-28 even further define the present invention over the cited art.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants, therefore, respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action and the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

By 

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